



The New York Public Library
Manuscripts and Archives Division

Guide to the

Sketch of the life of Maj. Gen. H. Dearborn; his account of the battle of Bunker-Hill, testimony in support of it, and the remarks of various writers, on that event, / arranged by Henry A.S. Dearborn, in Jan. 1820 : manuscript

1818-1820

MssCol 756

Summary

Creator: Dearborn, H. A. S. (Henry Alexander Scammell), 1783-1851

Title: Sketch of the life of Maj. Gen. H. Dearborn; his account of the battle of Bunker-Hill, testimony in support of it, and the remarks of various writers, on that event, / arranged by Henry A.S. Dearborn, in Jan. 1820 : manuscript

Date: 1818-1820

Size: .21 linear feet (1 volume)

Source: Purchased from Mrs. M. Dearborn McGrotty, 1896

Abstract: Henry Alexander Scammell Dearborn (1783-1851) of Roxbury, Massachusetts was a politician, militia officer, author and horticulturist. Born in Exeter, New Hampshire, he was the son of Henry Dearborn (1751-1829), an American army officer and statesman, and Dorcas Osgood Marble. The volume contains H.A.S. Dearborn's manuscript writings describing Henry Dearborn's military service in the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812, with clippings, correspondence and sworn statements related to his father's controversial published account of the battle of Bunker Hill (1818). Included is a manuscript map showing the position of American and British forces at the battle of Fort George in 1813. The compilation has a title page and table of contents (i-ix, 380 pages). In some cases a single page denotes the placement of laid-in items with multiple leaves.

Preferred citation: Sketch of the life of Maj. Gen. H. Dearborn; his account of the battle of Bunker-Hill, testimony in support of it, and the remarks of various writers, on that event, / arranged by Henry A.S. Dearborn, in Jan. 1820 : manuscript, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library

Processing note: Compiled by Susan P. Waide, 2015

Creator History

Henry Alexander Scammell Dearborn

Henry Alexander Scammell Dearborn (1783-1851) of Roxbury, Massachusetts was a politician, militia officer, author and horticulturist. Born in Exeter, New Hampshire, he was the son of Henry Dearborn (1751-1829), an American army officer and statesman, and Dorcas Osgood Marble.

H.A.S. Dearborn began his career as a lawyer and held various public offices and military commands during his life. He was Collector of Customs at Boston, 1812-1829, and in 1812 was appointed brigadier general in the Massachusetts militia, commanding volunteers at Boston Harbor defenses. Dearborn was a delegate to the Massachusetts Constitutional Convention of 1820-1821, and a member of the Massachusetts legislature, 1829-1830, and the U.S. House of Representatives, 1831-1833. In 1835 he was appointed Adjutant General of Massachusetts, but was dismissed in 1843 for loaning state arms to the government of Rhode Island to suppress the Dorr Rebellion in 1842. Dearborn was the author of several non-fiction works and wrote extensively on political, horticultural and other topics for newspapers and periodicals. He collaborated with his father to transcribe and edit his Revolutionary War journals, wrote sketches of his father's life and military career, and prepared materials for publication in the press on his behalf. A noted horticulturist and leader in the rural cemetery movement, Dearborn served as the first president of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society, founded in 1829. He also helped found the New England Society for the Promotion of Manufactures and the Mechanical Arts, which existed from 1826 to 1868. In 1847 the Native American Party, later known as the American Party and popularly as the Know Nothing Party, nominated him to run for U.S. Vice President. H.A.S. Dearborn was Mayor of Roxbury from 1847 until his death in 1851.

Henry Dearborn

Henry Dearborn (1751-1829) of New Hampshire was an American army officer and statesman. He fought in the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812, attaining the rank of senior Major General in the U.S. Army. Dearborn was U.S. Congressman from Massachusetts, 1793-1797; U.S. Secretary of War, 1801-1809; and U.S. minister to Portugal, 1822-1824.

At the outbreak of the Revolutionary War, Henry Dearborn was a practicing physician and captain of a New Hampshire militia company. He fought with the First and Third New Hampshire Regiments of the Continental Army, rising from captain to lieutenant colonel. In July 1781 he was appointed Deputy Quartermaster General and served on Washington's staff in Virginia. Notable events in his military service included the battle of Bunker Hill with the First New Hampshire Regiment, 1775; the expedition to Quebec, 1775, resulting in his capture, imprisonment and exchange; the battles of Saratoga, 1777, and Monmouth, 1778; and Major General John Sullivan's campaign against the Six Nations, 1779. He was with the main army in New York and New Jersey in 1780 and participated in the Yorktown Campaign in 1781. Upon his exchange in 1777, Dearborn served as major and then lieutenant colonel in the Third New Hampshire Regiment, transferring to the First New Hampshire Regiment in early 1781. He commanded the regiment upon the death of Colonel Alexander Scammell at Yorktown in October. Dearborn served at the garrison at Saratoga in the summer and fall of 1782, and received his discharge in June 1783.

In 1784 Dearborn moved to the District of Maine, then part of Massachusetts, settling in Pittston, now Gardiner, in Kennebec County. He became Major General of the Maine militia, was appointed U.S. Marshal for Maine in 1789, and served in the U.S. House of Representatives from the District, 1793 to 1797. After serving as Secretary of War during the Jefferson administration, he held the federal appointment of Collector of Customs for the port of Boston from 1809 until he was appointed senior Major General of the U.S. Army in January 1812. Although Dearborn's forces captured York (Toronto) and Fort George in the spring of 1813 during operations against Upper Canada, Dearborn's weakness as a strategic commander and severe illness led to his recall by Secretary of War John Armstrong in July of that year. Dearborn was re-assigned to command the military district of New York City and was honorably discharged in 1815. In 1817 he ran unsuccessfully as the Democratic-Republican candidate for governor of Massachusetts, and in 1818 his work *An account of the battle of Bunker Hill* was published. His final public office was U.S. minister to Portugal, 1822-1824.

Henry Dearborn was married three times: to Mary Bartlett in 1771, to Dorcas Osgood Marble in 1780, and to Sarah Bowdoin in 1813. Henry Alexander Scammell Dearborn (1783-1851) was his son by his second wife. Henry Dearborn died in Roxbury, Massachusetts.

Scope and Content Note

The volume contains H.A.S. Dearborn's manuscript writings describing Henry Dearborn's military service in the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812, with clippings, correspondence and sworn statements related to his father's controversial published account of the battle of Bunker Hill (1818). Included is a manuscript map showing the position of American and British forces at the battle of Fort George in 1813. The compilation has a title page and table of contents (i-ix, 380 pages). In some cases a single page denotes the placement of laid-in items with multiple leaves.

Also present is a loose incomplete draft by H.A.S. Dearborn explaining the circumstances behind his father's 1818 publication, with instructions for insertions keyed to the present volume. An item identified as a "Printed Sketch" of Henry Dearborn's life (page 106) is not found.

The principal writings are "A Sketch of the Life of Major General Henry Dearborn from 1775 to 1812" (pages 1-19); a "Narrative of the Campaign of 1813" (pages 21-53), with "Official Correspondence and Facts Relative to the appointment of Henry Dearborn" (pages 57-103); and "Maj. Gen. H. Dearborn's Vindication of his Account of the Battle of Bunker-Hill" (pages 185-235), with related correspondence, clippings and writings. Bunker Hill materials, with a few miscellaneous notes and clippings, begin after the Official Correspondence.

The bulk of the volume consists of documents relating to Henry Dearborn's *An account of the battle of Bunker Hill*, published in 1818, and its controversial portrayal of Israel Putnam's conduct in battle. Putnam's defense was taken up in print by his son Daniel Putnam (annexed to his reprint of Dearborn's account, 1818) and others. Portions of those two imprints are found in the volume. Responses from the public and the press supporting one account or the other, some along political party lines, are represented mainly in newspaper clippings. Of particular interest are the original and transcribed letters and sworn statements obtained by H.A.S. Dearborn supporting his father's account of the battle, made by participants at the battle of Bunker Hill, or their relatives and acquaintances. Items numbered 1 to 14 were published in the *Boston Patriot and Daily Chronicle* of June 13, 1818 as "Battle of Bunker-Hill. Maj-Gen. H. Dearborn's Vindication." Original items comprise a signed statement by Samuel R. Trevett (page 193, published as number 3), and letters from H.A.S. Dearborn's correspondents: Major Caleb Stark, with a signed statement by John Cochran, a physician of Pembroke, New Hampshire (pages 253-254); Charles Coffin (pages 312-328); Samuel S. Conner (pages 266-268); and New Hampshire Governor William Plumer (page 272). The authors of anonymous news articles (including H.A.S. Dearborn) are sometimes identified. The materials shed light on the contemporary political aspects of the controversy as well as Putnam's military career. The volume ends with a brief text by H.A.S. Dearborn entitled "Cols. Trumbull and Small !!!!! Per Nobile Fratrum !!!!!" (pages 372-380).

The "Narrative of the Campaign of 1813" recounts Dearborn's career as the senior Major General in the U.S. Army, from his appointment in 1812 to his removal from command in July 1813, with a manuscript map of the battle of Fort George (detached from page 28). It continues with "Official Correspondence and Facts Relative to the appointment of Henry Dearborn" (pages 57-103), containing transcriptions of Dearborn's correspondence with Presidents Madison and Monroe, and Secretary of War John Armstrong, regarding his removal. Edited portions of the Sketch, Narrative, and Official Correspondence are found in Charles Coffin's *The lives and services of Major General John Thomas*,

Colonel Thomas Knowlton, Colonel Alexander Scammell, Major General Henry Dearborn (New York: Egbert, Hovey & King, 1845).

Key Terms

Occupations

Authors

Politicians

Soldiers

Subjects

Bunker Hill, Battle of, Boston, Mass., 1775

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Manuscript maps

Manuscripts for publication

Military maps

Geographic Names

United States -- History -- 1783-1865

United States -- History -- Revolution, 1775-1783 -- Personal narratives

United States -- History -- War of 1812

Names

Coffin, Charles, 1779-1851

Conner, Samuel S.

Dearborn, Henry, 1751-1829

Plumer, William, 1759-1850

Putnam, Israel, 1718-1790

Stark, Caleb, 1759-1838